

AMENDMENT TO THE DRAWING(S)

New Fig. 3 is being submitted.

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant thanks the Examiner and the Supervisory Examiner for the opportunity of a telephone interview conducted on September 12, 2006, in the above-identified application. During the telephone interview, it was agreed that Buono does not disclose or suggest a flanged member with points on a curve that meet a plane inclined in the radial direction of the flanged member. It was further agreed that applicant will submit a written response with claim amendments in accordance with the foregoing point of distinction. The foregoing will serve as applicant's statement of the substance of the interview.

Claims 1-8 and 10-13 are the claims currently pending in the present application. These claims are amended to clarify features recited thereby.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging review and consideration of the reference cited in the Information Disclosure Statement filed on March 16, 2006.

Drawings Objection

The drawings are objected to on the ground that a feature of the invention claimed in claims 5 and 14 is not shown.

Filed herewith is Fig. 3 showing the curve of the flanged end with a varying concavity. Fig. 3 introduces no impermissible new matter.

Claim Objections

Claims 1 and 8 are objected to for containing a grammatical error, and for not including parentheses around reference numerals, respectively. Claims 1 and 8 are amended.

Rejection of Claims 1-8 and 10-14 under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 1-8 and 10-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite.

Claims 1, 4, 5 and 11 are amended.

With respect to claims 6 and 7, applicant respectfully points out that starting from the tubular duct section 15 and 16 of the flanged members, nearest in the radial direction refers to points on the flanged members that are nearest with respect to an axis line of the tubular duct 15 and 16.

With respect to claim 10, applicant cites reference numerals 17 and 18 of Fig. 1 explained, for example, at page 7 describing the transition area 17 and 18.

The remaining claims are allowable because the claims from which they depend are amended.

Rejection of Claims 1-8 and 10-14 under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1- 8 and 10-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious from Buono, U.S. Patent No. 2,940,779. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Independent claims 1 and 11 require a flanged member with a proximal point on the at least the portion of said first end surface and a distal point of the at least the portion of said first end surface that meet a plane inclined in the radial direction of the flanged member.

Buono discloses a balanced face flange for a pipe 10 adjacent to a welding neck or collar 18 that includes an annular sealing face 30 and a flat radial outer face 16 between which a gasket 24 is enclosed.

Buono does not disclose or suggest a concave end surface such that points of the concave end surface meet a plane inclined in the radial direction of the flanged member. That is, Buono does not disclose or suggest an end surface at least a portion of which is inclined in the radial direction and is curved. As discussed, the annular sealing face 30 is not shown as inclined, let alone inclined in a radial direction. Further, Buono does not disclose or suggest an end surface at least a portion of which is inclined in the radial direction and concave. Accordingly, Buono does not disclose or suggest the recitations of independent claims 1 and 11.

Moreover, Buono does not disclose or suggest the problems recognized and solved by applicant's claimed invention. For example, according to an aspect of applicant's claimed invention, the flange member is provided with an inclined concave end surface in order to prepare it against a convex bulging of the end surface caused by the affixing of the end surface of the flange member to another end surface of the flange member and by pressure over time. Accordingly, Buono does not disclose or suggest the above-discussed problems recognized and solved by applicant's claimed invention, and therefore it is respectfully submitted that the recitations of claims 1 and 11 would not have been obvious based on Buono.

In view of the foregoing remarks, withdrawal of the objections and the rejections and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

EXPRESS MAIL CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as Express Mail to Addressee (mail label # EV605030685US) in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop RCE, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on October 11, 2006:

Dorothy Jenkins

Name of Person Mailing Correspondence

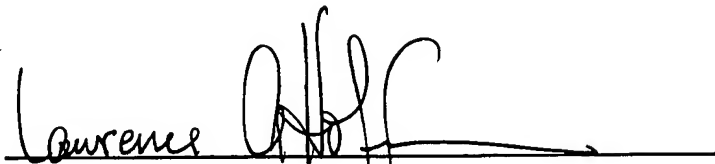
Signature

October 11, 2006

Date of Signature

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lawrence A. Hoffman", written over a horizontal line.

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